



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

BARRON, CHIPPEWA, CLARK, DUNN, EAU CLAIRE, PEPIN, PIERCE, POLK, ST. CROIX

June 2004

Employers Add Workers in May

West Central Wisconsin employers added over 2,500 jobs in May and most of those jobs were in the rural counties of the region. Employers in the Chippewa-Eau Claire metropolitan statistical area added only 200 jobs, well below the average number of jobs added in May in the last few years. Because of the weak job growth in the metro area the regional increase also fell shy of more typical job gains in May.

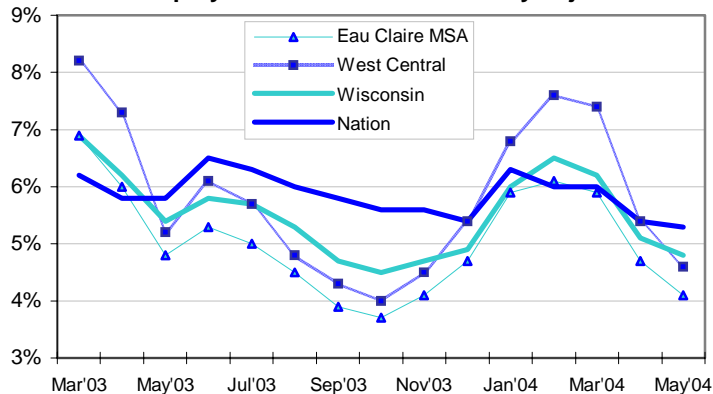
The additional jobs did help reduce unemployment in the area, however, and unemployment rates dropped in each of the nine counties. Because of the weak seasonal gains in the Eau Claire metro area the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose, as it did in the State of Wisconsin. Seasonally adjusted the Eau Claire unemployment rate in May was 4.6 percent, the state rate was 5.1 percent and the national rate was 5.6 percent.

The reduction in the number of unemployed, down 1,960 from April, in the region was also greater than the increase in employed, up 1,525 during the month. That means there are still discouraged job seekers in some counties, but especially in Chippewa and Eau Claire, in spite of the increase in jobs.

The unemployment rate for West Central Wisconsin in May was 4.6 percent, down from 5.4 percent in April and lower than the rate one year ago of 5.2 percent. In the metro area the May rate was 4.1 percent, not seasonally adjusted, down from 4.7 percent in April and from 4.8 percent last year. Meanwhile, the unadjusted unemployment rate in the state was 4.8 percent, down from 5.1 percent in April and the national rate was 5.3 percent down from 5.4 percent in April.

Only two counties in West Central Wisconsin had an unemployment rate over five percent, Barron with 5.6 percent unemployed and Clark with 5.4 percent unemployed. The unemployment rate in Clark County declined from

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Mar'03	Apr'03	May'03	Mar'04	Apr'04	May'04
Eau Claire MSA	6.9%	6.0%	4.8%	5.9%	4.7%	4.1%
West Central	8.2%	7.3%	5.2%	7.4%	5.4%	4.6%
Wisconsin	6.9%	6.2%	5.4%	6.2%	5.1%	4.8%
Nation	6.2%	5.8%	5.8%	6.0%	5.4%	5.3%

Civilian Labor Force Estimates* for West Central Wisconsin counties: May 2004

	Barron			Chippewa			Clark			Dunn			Eau Claire Co.		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Labor force	24,939	24,810	24,663	32,398	32,790	31,792	16,748	16,873	16,323	24,600	24,389	24,131	56,425	56,756	55,193
Employed	23,533	23,210	23,381	30,882	30,933	30,007	15,840	15,680	15,291	23,662	23,280	23,155	54,305	54,395	52,767
Unemployed	1,406	1,600	1,282	1,516	1,857	1,785	908	1,193	1,032	938	1,109	976	2,120	2,361	2,426
% unemployed	5.6	6.4	5.2	4.7	5.7	5.6	5.4	7.1	6.3	3.8	4.5	4.0	3.8	4.2	4.4

	Pepin			Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			West Central region		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Labor force	3,314	3,292	3,185	21,652	21,582	21,228	23,134	23,053	23,349	38,699	38,800	38,521	241,909	242,345	238,385
Employed	3,161	3,110	3,060	20,749	20,579	20,299	21,902	21,621	21,900	36,816	36,516	36,017	230,850	229,324	225,877
Unemployed	153	182	125	903	1,003	929	1,232	1,432	1,449	1,883	2,284	2,504	11,059	13,021	12,508
% unemployed	4.6	5.5	3.9	4.2	4.6	4.4	5.3	6.2	6.2	4.9	5.9	6.5	4.6	5.4	5.2

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for West Central Wisconsin: May 2004

(Employment in thousands)	Barron			Clark			Dunn			Pepin		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Total Nonfarm	21.6	21.2	21.7	10.3	10.1	10.1	16.8	16.5	16.7	2.2	2.2	2.2
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.2
Manufacturing	6.0	6.0	6.3	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Trade	3.5	3.4	3.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.8	2.8	2.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.7	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	0.3	0.2	0.2
Info/Prof. & Bus.Serv./Other	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.3	1.2	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total Government	4.7	4.7	4.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	4.5	4.6	4.8	0.5	0.5	0.5

	Pierce			Polk			St. Croix			Eau Claire MSA		
	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03	May '04	Apr '04	May '03
Total Nonfarm	10.8	10.4	10.4	14.5	14.3	14.7	27.3	26.6	27.0	79.1	78.9	77.9
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.8	1.6	1.7	3.4	3.3	3.3
Manufacturing	1.1	1.1	0.8	3.6	3.6	3.7	5.1	5.1	5.4	11.1	11.1	11.0
Trade	0.8	0.8	1.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	4.5	4.4	4.3	13.0	13.0	12.5
Transportation & Utilities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.8	2.8	2.8
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	3.6	3.5	3.6
Education & Health Services	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	12.7	12.7	12.4
Leisure & Hospitality	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.2	3.4	3.2	3.2	7.8	7.5	7.7
Information/Prof. & Bus.Serv.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	3.8	3.7	3.6	8.2	8.2	8.0
Other Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.9	3.9	3.8
Total Government	3.9	3.9	3.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.6	3.5	3.8	12.6	12.9	12.8

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2003 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

7.1 percent in April, the greatest decline in unemployment in the region. However, all nine counties were among the 66 statewide with a lower unemployment rate in May. There were only nine counties in the state that posted higher unemployment rates compared with one year ago and two, Barron and Pepin, were in the West Central region.

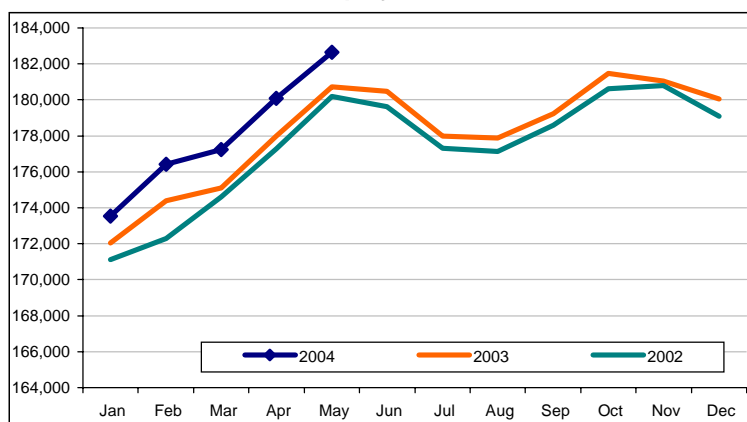
The increase in jobs was fairly broad-based in the region with all industries except government reporting higher job estimates. The greatest increase in jobs, nearly 1,000 in May, occurred in construction. Construction employers from all counties added jobs in May which increased the regional total for construction employment to 8,800. Even though most construction jobs are in the metro area employers there added only 100 jobs in May, a month that generally sees over 400 new jobs in construction. This is the first time in 15 months

where construction employment lagged historical trends in job growth but it is too soon to indicate a future trend.

The second largest share of new jobs in May occurred when leisure and hospitality employers added 950 workers. This too occurred in every county in the region, and like construction employment, is very seasonal. Unlike construction, the metro area increase in employment in leisure and hospitality is on track with previous years as was the increase for the entire region.

The number of residents in West Central Wisconsin who filed a claim

Total Nonfarm Employment in West Central



for unemployment compensation benefits in mid-June is now below levels for the same week in 2001. In mid-June there were 3,987 claims filed by local residents compared with 5,214 for the same week in 2003 and 3,932 in 2001. In mid-June metro residents filed 1,677 claims while 2,255 claims were filed by residents from the non-metro counties in the region.



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